

It will be remembered that in his Budget speech the Chancellor was proceeding on the assumption that the war would last till March 31st next—the date at which our financial year ends—and would then be convenient enough to stop. Happily for us, the valour of our soldiers and those of our Allies, the splendid success of our Fleet and our merchantmen in bringing over American troops and their food and equipment with astonishing speed, and the straightforward diplomacy of President Wilson, combined to achieve victory nearly five months earlier than the most sanguine had dared to expect. With the very pleasant result—though it is a small matter when compared with the end of the killing of the best of our manhood—that the financial position is very greatly improved. With regard to the figures given above, it should be observed that the debts are advances to Dominions, but on quite a different basis from our loans to them, being money owed by them against goods and services supplied.* They and the balances in the hands of agents are both as good as gold. Concerning the others, one is entitled at first sight to feel a good deal of scepticism, since such articles as land, buildings, ships and stores, bought or built by Government during a war, are likely to find an extremely sluggish demand when the war is over. However, Mr Bonar Law assured the House that his valuation of these

amounts had been
arrived at on a conservative basis, and,
what is better
still, in his Vote of Credit speech on
November 12th,
he was able to state that revised
estimates had shown
* Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 105, No, 33, p.
698,